GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4884
ANSWERED ON:24.08.2000
INVOLVEMENT OF ARMY IN ARRANGEMENT FOR KUMBH MELA
DHARMRAJ SINGH PATEL

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that a Maha Kumbh Mela is being organised at the Trivani Sangam at Allahabad during November-December, 2000 and January-February, 2001;

(b) if so, whether a makeshift bridge is likely to be constructed on the Yamuna river in Allahabad for the safety of the crowd;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, whether the military could escape from this responsibility?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) to (d): A statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4884 FO 24.8.2000

The responsibility for making necessary arrangements for the Kumbh Mela is essentially that of the State Government. The Army has, however, in the past launched bailey pontoon bridge on the Yamuna on the occasion of Ardh Kumbh/Kumbh Mela only as an 'Aid to Civil Authority'.

2. The bridging equipment which has been used by the Army in the past, has become obsolete and its installation is not considered to be free from risk. The Central Command of the Army had accordingly intimated the Mela authorities in May, 2000, its inability to launch the bailey pontoon bridge during the ensuing Kumbh Mela.

3. In the context of the request of the State Government, received in July, 2000, for launching of a bailey bridge during the ensuing Kumbh Mela, the matter has been reconsidered and it has emerged that an alternate set of floating bridge can be constructed from the Army HQrs' reserves. The exact availability of the equipment is being ascertained.